DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 817 RC 022 416

TITLE	Latinos in Education.
INSTITUTION	White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	17p.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text of individual sections: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/Hispanic/rr/.
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; College Students; *Educational Attainment; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Enrollment; Enrollment Projections; Higher Education; *Hispanic American Students; Population Trends; Preschool Children; Preschool Education; School Demography; Secondary School Students
IDENTIFIERS	*Latinos

ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a snapshot of Latinos in the U.S. education system from early childhood through graduate education. Latino students comprise about 15 percent of the K-12 population today and are expected to reach about 25 percent by 2025. California, Texas, and Florida serve the highest concentrations of Hispanic students. Latino educational attainment lags behind that of the rest of the nation. Differences in achievement between Hispanics and non-Hispanics begin as early as kindergarten and continue through high school. Latinos in higher education tend to be concentrated in a relatively small number of institutions in five states. A section on Latinos in early childhood education covers the under-5 population, enrollments of Latino children aged 3-5 compared to other ethnic groups, urban-suburban comparisons, influence of parental education and income, and school readiness. A section on Latinos in elementary education (K-8) discusses population, enrollment, urbanicity and poverty, academic achievement, limited English proficiency, computer usage, and Hispanic teachers. A section on Latinos in secondary education (9-12) reviews population, enrollment, academic achievement, dropout rates, course selection, high school completion rates, and college preparation. A section on Latinos in higher education covers population, enrollment rates, type of institution, concentration in a few institutions and states, part-time students, student financial aid, college completion, and degrees awarded. A section on Latinos in graduate education discusses enrollment, gender differences, financial aid, degrees awarded, and Latino faculty. (SV)

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LATINOS IN EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD ★ ELEMENTARY

SECONDARY ★ UNDERGRADUATE ★

GRADUATE

ED 440 817

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Acknowledgments:

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans would like to thank the following people for the use of the photographs on this cover: the staff and student body of Gertrude Leal Elementary School in Mission, Texas; Rebecca Sepulveda at Laredo Community College in Laredo, Texas; Richard Toscano, James Epperson, Olga Alvarez, and Carlos and Stephan Perez.

Summary

This publication provides a snapshot of information about Latinos in our nation's education system from early childhood through graduate education. We hope this publication will inform and stimulate a dialogue based on both the strengths and challenges presented by Latinos in U.S. education.

The education of Hispanic students creates a great opportunity and an increasing challenge for schools throughout the United States. It is projected that by the year 2005, the Hispanic population will comprise the largest minority in the United States (13 percent of the population). Latinos are also one of the youngest population groups in the United States (one-third of Latinos are under 18 years of age). Today, Latino students compose about 15 percent of the K-12 population, and it is expected that by 2025, they will represent about 25 percent of that population. California, Texas and Florida serve the highest concentration of Latino students and in some of their school districts, Latinos are already the majority.

While the Latino population continues to grow, on average the educational attainment of the Hispanic community continues to lag behind that of the rest of the nation. The achievement gap between Hispanic students and their peers is the result of multiple factors, among them their low participation in pre-school programs, segregation into "resource poor" schools, high dropout rates, low family incomes, and limited English proficiency.

The differences in achievement between Hispanics and non-Hispanics begin as early as kindergarten and continue through high school. The high school completion rate for Latinos has not changed substantially in the past several years, and the dropout rate for Hispanics remains unacceptably high. However, Latino students continue to have high college aspirations and, while Latinos are less likely than other ethnic groups to be enrolled in college preparatory or academic programs, their overall numbers in those programs have increased.

Latinos in higher education tend to be concentrated in a relatively small number of institutions (Hispanic-Serving Institutions) and in several key states—California, Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois—where there are large Hispanic populations. Their degree attainment is increasing, but is still very low given the size of the population.

Latinos in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education, or preschool, encompasses education programs for children up to 5 years of age, and may provide related services to meet children's psychological and health needs. Preschool prepares children for a solid education by teaching learning and socialization skills. Given the importance of these efforts and services, both the federal government and the states make significant investments in early childhood programs, totaling about $10 billion annually.

Population

- The Hispanic population in the United States is very young. Today, 10% of Hispanics are under age 5 and make up over 15% of their age group in the U.S. population. By the year 2030, they will make up 25% of the total school-age population. The projected increase in the number of Hispanic children in preschool brings with it critical strengths and challenges to the nation's education system. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P25-1130, 1996]

Enrollment

- Hispanic children under age 5 are less likely to be enrolled in early childhood education programs. In 1998, only 20% of Hispanic 3-year-olds were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 42% of whites and 44% of blacks (Figure 1). Of 4-year-olds, less than 60% of Hispanics were enrolled in early childhood programs, compared to 67% of whites and 73% of blacks. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P20-521, Table-2]

- In 1998, differences in the enrollment of 5-year-olds largely disappeared between Hispanics (90%), whites (94%) and blacks (95%). However, while the enrollment gap closes at kindergarten, Latino children still remain less prepared for school because of lower enrollment rates at the younger ages. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P20-521, Table-2]

- In 1998, the early childhood education enrollment rate for Hispanics was similar in both urban (48%) and suburban (42%) locations. By comparison, the enrollment rate for blacks was higher in urban areas (55%) than in suburban areas (32%), while the rate for whites was much higher in suburban areas (62%) than in urban areas (19%). [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P20-521, Table-5]

- As parents' educational attainment increases, so does the early childhood enrollment rate of their children. However, in 1997, fewer Hispanics age 25 and older had completed high school than their black and white counterparts—55% of Hispanics, 75% of blacks, and 86% of whites had completed high school. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 8]

Income and Enrollment

- In 1998, the median family income for Hispanics was about $28,000 while the overall median income was $39,000. Research shows that families with higher incomes are more likely to enroll their 3- and 4-year-olds in early childhood education than those with lower incomes. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 44] [Bureau of the *Census, CPS Report*, No. P60-206, 1998]

- While Latino children are overrepresented in families living in poverty, they are underrepresented in Head Start programs designed to remedy the effect of poverty on educational achievement. In 1998, the child poverty rate for children under 6 years of age was 36% for Hispanics, 40% for blacks and 15% for whites. In Fiscal Year 1998, Head Start served 822,316 children. Of these, 36% were black, 32% white, 26% Hispanic and 3% American Indian and Asian. [*1999 Head Start Fact Sheet*, Administration for Children, Youth and Families]

School Readiness

- Hispanics are more likely to tell their child a story than read to them. Three- to 5-year-olds may start school better prepared to learn if they are read to or told a story once a week. In 1996, of 3- to 5-year olds, 80% of Hispanics were told a story—consistent with blacks (77%) and whites (84%).. Hispanic children were less likely to be read to—65% of Hispanics were read to, compared to about 75% of blacks and nearly 90% of whites. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 34]

- Approximately 70% of teachers said they felt only moderately, somewhat, or not at all prepared to address the needs of students with limited English proficiency or from diverse cultural backgrounds. This lack of preparation has profound implications for the large population of Hispanic students in early childhood today. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 23]

Percentage of 3-Year-Olds in Each Group Enrolled in Early Childhood Programs, 1998

Figure 1

Latinos in Elementary Education (K-8)

The elementary school years are a period of significant development for the child in all areas of learning, providing the foundation for a successful high school experience. Elementary education generally includes kindergarten through grade eight, referred to in various grade groupings as primary, elementary, and middle school.

Population

- Today, Hispanics comprise 15% of the elementary school-age population (5-13). By the year 2025, Latinos in this age group will make up nearly 25% of the elementary school-age population (Figure 2). [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P25-1130, 1996]

Enrollment

- Between 1978 and 1998, the enrollment of Hispanics in public elementary schools increased 157% compared to 20% for black students and 10% for white students. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, Table A-1, 1999]

Urbanicity and Poverty

- Latino students now experience more isolation from whites and more concentration in high-poverty schools than any other group of students. In 1998, close to 50% of Hispanics in public education attended urban schools. In comparison, just over 50% of blacks and only 18% of whites in public schools were enrolled in urban schools. Further, the nation's 10 largest central city school districts enrolled close to 25% of Latino students, 18% of black students and only 2% of white students. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, P20-521, 1998] [*Resegregation in American Schools*, The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, 1999]

- In 1996, about one out of every four students who lived in a central city and who attended public schools was Hispanic, up from about one out of every 10 students in 1972. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 46]

- Latino students, on average, attend schools with more than twice as many poor classmates as in those attended by white students (46% vs. 19%). In addition, just over one-third of Hispanics (34%) and blacks (37%) under age 14 lived in poverty, compared to 14% of whites. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, P60-206, 1998] [*Resegregation in American Schools*, The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, 1999]

Educational Achievement

- Overall, Hispanic students consistently perform below the national average in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Disparities begin as early as kindergarten and remain through age 17. By age nine, Hispanic students lag behind their non-Hispanic peers in reading, mathematics and science proficiency. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 1, 2, 4 – 6]

- While not all Hispanic students are limited english proficient (LEP), Hispanics constitute about 75% of all students enrolled in LEP programs, including bilingual education and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. [*Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Compliance Report, 1988-1994*]

- Computers have become an essential tool in our society and early exposure to computers can help prepare students for future success in the workplace. However, Hispanic students are less likely than their white peers to use a computer at school or at home. In 1997, 68% of Hispanic children used a computer at school, compared to 70% of blacks and 84% of whites. Further, only 18% of Hispanic students used a computer at home, compared to 19% of black students and 52% of white students. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 18]

Teachers

- The number of Hispanic teachers lags far behind the number of Hispanic students. While Hispanic students comprise about 15% of public school students, only about 4% of public school teachers are Hispanic. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 68]

Percentage of Population Projections for Elementary School-Age Children, by Race/Ethnicity

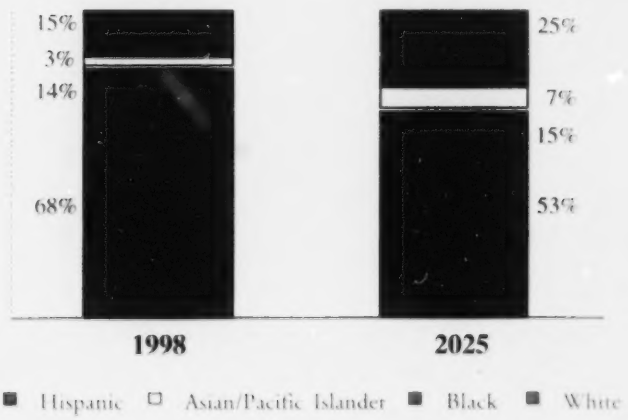

Figure 2

Latinos in Secondary Education (9-12)

Secondary education is a critical means of achieving upward mobility and helps individuals negotiate the path to achievement and economic success. Secondary education, or high school, generally includes grades nine through twelve.

Population

- Hispanic students in secondary education represent 13% of the current school population in grades 9-12. By the year 2030, Latinos in grades 9-12 will make up 23% of the school population for these grades. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P25-1130, 1996]

Enrollment

- Among 15-17 year olds, 34% of Hispanic students were enrolled below grade level. Enrollment below grade level is a significant variable because it is the highest predictor of school dropout rates. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, Number P20-513, Table A-2, 1998]

Educational Achievement

- The dropout rate for Hispanics is much higher than for other ethnic groups. In 1998, 30% of all Latino 16- through 24-year-olds were dropouts (1.5 million), more than double the dropout rate for blacks (14%) and more than three times the rate for whites (8%). [NCES, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1998*]

- High Hispanic dropout rates are partly attributable to the relatively greater dropout rates among Hispanic immigrants. The dropout rate for Hispanic 16- to 24-year-olds born outside the United States (44%) was double the rate for those born in the United States. (21%). [NCES, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1998*]

- In 1996, the average National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores of Hispanic students age 17 were well below those of their white peers in math, reading and science. [NCES, *The Condition of Education 1998*, Indicator 16]

- Hispanic students have earned more credits in computer science, foreign languages and English than other groups. Despite increases in upper-level course selection among Hispanic high school students, Hispanic students still earn fewer credits than other groups in history, science and mathematics. [NCES, *The Educational Progress of Hispanic Students, The Condition of Education, 1995*]

Educational Attainment

- The low high school completion rate for Latinos has not changed substantially in several years. High school completion rates for white and black students in 1998 were 90% and 81%, respectively. However, the high school completion rate for Hispanics was only 63%. [NCES, *Dropout Rates in the United States: 1998*]

- While Latino parents are increasing their educational attainment rates, these rates are still below those of other ethnic groups. Higher levels of parental educational attainment are generally associated with positive educational outcomes and experiences, such as high school completion, for their children. The percentage of Hispanic parents earning a high school diploma has improved, from 23% in 1972 to 45% in 1997. By comparison, in 1997, over 90% of white parents had earned a high school diploma. [NCES, *The Condition of Education 1998*, Supplemental Table 44-4]

College Preparation

- Hispanic students are more often than not tracked into general courses that satisfy only the basic requirements and not those that provide access to four-year colleges or to rigorous technical schools. More Hispanic students (50%) are enrolled in general programs of study than either whites (39%) or blacks (40%). Only 35% of Latino students are enrolled in college preparatory or academic programs, compared to 50% of whites and 43% of blacks. [NCES, *Trends Among High School Seniors, NELS:88, 1972-1992, 1995*]

- In 1997, Hispanics were at least three times as likely to take a foreign language Advanced Placement (AP) examination as whites. Hispanic students were also five times as likely as whites to be eligible for college credit from these tests (with a grade 3 or higher). White students were more likely than blacks or Hispanics to take AP examinations in all other subject areas. [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicator 14]

- The percentage of Hispanic seniors who planned to continue their education at a four-year college doubled from 24% in 1972, to 50% in 1992 (Figure 3). The percentage who planned to attend a two-year program increased from 12% to 20%. [NCES, *Trends Among High School Seniors, NELS-88, Second Follow-up, 1992*]

Percentage of Hispanics Who Planned To Attend College, by Type of Institution

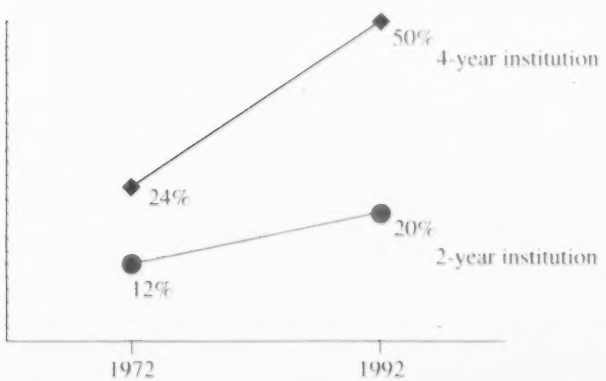

Figure 3

Latinos in Undergraduate Education

Undergraduate education is considered today to be an important path to ensuring a better future in our economy. Undergraduate education is study beyond secondary school at an institution offering programs terminating in an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Population

- Hispanics currently represent 14.5% (3.6 million) of the total traditional college-age population (18-24 years). By the year 2025, Hispanics will comprise 22% of that population. [Bureau of the Census, *CPS Report*, No. P20-516, 1997]

Enrollment

- The representation of Hispanics in higher education continues to grow. In 1996, Hispanic students represented almost 10% of the total student enrollment in higher education. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 207]

- Between 1976 and 1996, the number of Hispanics enrolled in undergraduate education increased 202%, compared with only 13% for whites and 44% for blacks. In one year alone (1995-96), Hispanic enrollment increased 5%, the largest one-year increase of any ethnic group. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 207]

- Hispanic students enroll in college immediately upon graduation from high school at a rate similar to that of other groups—66%, compared to 68% for whites and about 60% for blacks. However, Hispanic 18-to 24-year old high school completers enroll in college at lower rates (36%) than whites (46%) and blacks (40%). [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1999*, Indicators 53 and 54]

- The majority of Hispanic undergraduates are enrolled in two-year institutions (53%). In comparison, the majority of white and black undergraduates are enrolled in four-year institutions (56% and 51%, respectively). [NCES, IPEDS, 1997 Fall Enrollment]

- Latino enrollment in undergraduate education is concentrated in a small number of institutions. About 40% of Hispanic undergraduate students are enrolled in fewer than 200 institutions of higher education known as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). HSIs are accredited degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with at least 25 percent total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent student enrollment. [NCES, IPEDS, 1997 Fall Enrollment] [Higher Education Amendments of 1965, as amended, 1998]

- Latino undergraduate students are concentrated in several key states. Just over 50% of all Hispanics enrolled in higher education are in two states: California and Texas. Almost 75% of Latinos enrolled in higher education are in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois (Figure 4). [NCES, IPEDS, 1997 Fall Enrollment]

- A higher percentage of Hispanic students (45%) are enrolled part time than either white or black students (39% and 40%, respectively). Hispanics (35%) are also more likely than white or black students (25% and 32%, respectively) to take more than six years to receive a bachelor's degree. [NCES, IPEDS, 1997 Fall Enrollment] [NCES, *The Condition of Education, 1996*, Supplemental Table 11-1]

Financial Aid

- Hispanic students tend to borrow less to pay for their education. As first-year students, close to 50% of Hispanics received grants while less than 30% received loans to pay for their education. In comparison, close to 60% of blacks received grants and 42% received loans, and 46% of whites received grants and 31% received loans. [NCES, *Descriptive Summary of 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students, 5 Years Later*, Table 15.1, May 1996]

Educational Attainment

- Hispanics have increased their undergraduate degree attainment. In 1996, Hispanic students earned 7% of all associate's and 5% of all bachelor's degrees. In total, Hispanics doubled their undergraduate degree attainment from 1976. [NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, 1998, Table 262]

- The top three disciplines for bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanic students in 1996 were business, social sciences and education. The top three disciplines for associate's degrees awarded to Hispanics were liberal arts, business and the health professions. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 265]

State Concentration of Hispanic Enrollment in Undergraduate Education, 1997

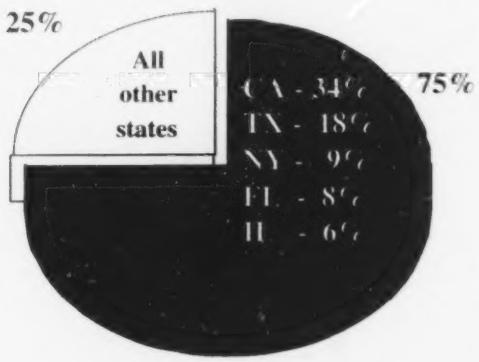

Figure 4

Latinos in Graduate Education

Graduate education provides the opportunity to rise to the professional level of a discipline and to become an expert in a field of study. A graduate education program generally requires study beyond the bachelor's degree, resulting in a master's, first-professional or doctoral degree.

Enrollment

- While Hispanics have increased their enrollment in graduate education, they are still less represented than other groups. In 1996, Hispanics represented 4% of graduate students, while whites represented 73%, and blacks represented 6%. In 1976, Hispanics represented only 2% of graduate students. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics 1998*, Table 207]

- In the past 20 years, Hispanic women have surpassed Hispanic men in graduate enrollment. In 1976, 45% of Hispanics enrolled were women compared to 55% of men. In 1996, 60% of Latinos enrolled in graduate education were women compared to 40% of men. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 207]

- Although their enrollment rates are small, Hispanics in graduate education are more likely to enroll full time than either white or black students. Of Hispanics in graduate education, 42% are enrolled full time, compared with 37% of whites and 39% of blacks. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 208]

- In 1995-96, 7% of all first-professionals were Hispanic, 6% were black, and 76% were white. Although the percentage of whites in law programs is higher (75%) than for any other race-ethnic group, Hispanics enroll at a higher rate (11%) in law programs than any other minority group. [NCES, *Graduate and First-Professional Students, National Postsecondary Education Student Aid Study, 1996*]

Financial Aid

- Hispanics studying for master's degrees receive less grant aid and work more than either white or black students. In 1995-96, only about 20% of Hispanic students received grants, compared to over 30% of both white and black students. In tandem, 20% of Hispanics received assistantships, compared to 10% for blacks and 9% for whites. Among full-time master's students, Hispanics received even less aid. Only 65% of Hispanic students received any aid, compared to 76% of whites and 90% of blacks. [NCES, *Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education, 1995-96*, May, 1998 Table 2.3a]

- Hispanic full-time master's and first-professional degree students receive less aid than any other ethnic group. The average aid for Hispanic master's degree students is only $8,729, compared to $13,875 for blacks and $12,566 for whites (Figure 5). For first-professional degree students, the average aid for Hispanics is only $16,766, compared to $21,440 for blacks, $18,182 for whites, and $18,416 for Asian/Pacific Islanders. [NCES, *Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education, 1995-96*, May, 1998 Table 2.4]

- Of first-professional degree students, a higher percentage of Hispanics borrow or work than either blacks or whites. In 1995-96, 73% of Hispanics had loans and 6% participated in work-study. In comparison, 70% of whites had loans and 5% were in work-study, and 71% of blacks had loans and 4% were in work-study. [NCES, *Student Financing of Graduate and First-Professional Education, 1995-96*, May, 1998, Table 2.3a]

Educational Attainment

- In 1996, Latinos earned about 4% of all master's degrees. The four disciplines in which the most master's degrees were earned by Hispanics were education, business, public administration and the health professions. [NCES, Digest of Education Statistics, 1998, Table 268]

- Latinos earned 2% of all doctoral degrees in 1996. The four disciplines in which the most doctoral degrees were earned by Hispanics were education, psychology, biological/life sciences and social sciences/history. [NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1998*, Table 268]

Faculty

- In 1992, Latinos represented less than 3 percent of full-time instructional faculty and staff in higher education. [NCES, *Instructional Faculty and Staff in Higher Education Institution, Fall 1987 and Fall 1992, 1997*]

Average Financial Aid of Master's Degree Students, by Race/Ethnicity

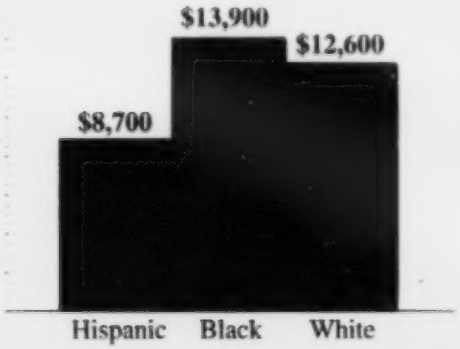

Figure 5

Notes

By the Authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to advance the development of human potential, to strengthen the Nation's capacity to provide high-quality education, and to increase the opportunities for Hispanic Americans to participate in and benefit from Federal education programs, it is hereby ordered..."

Executive Order 12900
President Clinton, February 22, 1994

Recognizing the importance of increasing the level of educational attainment for Hispanic Americans, President Clinton established the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans through Executive Order 12900 in September 1994. Guiding the White House Initiative is the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, whose responsibility is to advise the president, the secretary of education and the nation on the most pressing educational needs of Hispanic Americans. The White House Initiative also provides the connection between the Commission, the White House, the federal government and the Latino community throughout the nation.

Current White House Initiative activities include initiating policy seminars, developing issue briefs, factsheets and information kits on the condition of Latinos in education, facilitating community outreach, increasing understanding and awareness of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and coordinating high-level efforts across the national government to improve education for Hispanics. These activities are driven by the president's request to assess:

- Hispanic educational attainment from pre-K through graduate and professional school;
- State, private sector, and community involvement in education;
- The extent to which federal activities in education complement existing efforts to increase education opportunities; and,
- Hispanic federal employment and federal recruitment strategies.

Accelerating the educational success of Hispanic Americans is among the most important keys to America's continued success. Please join us in ensuring educational excellence for all Americans.

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